

February 27, 2023
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American Federation of Teachers 933

In Support of:

House Bill 5673: AN ACT CONCERNING THE REFORMATION OF CERTAIN
TAXES AND TAX EQUITY.

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Horn, and the distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

My name is Rebecca Mickelson and I live in East Haven. I teach art at a public pre-K in New Haven and am a member of the American Federation of Teachers.

**I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning The
Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity**

Connecticut is a state of staggering wealth disparity. The people with the most money puppeteer a system that leaves the majority of us with very little power to advocate for the quality of life we deserve. The resources for a healthy society have always existed, but disparities in power have led to its consolidation in the hands of a few. In case it has not been made evident, trickle-down economics does not, in fact, trickle down. We need accountability measures and checks and balances on the extremely wealthy. We need our elected officials to see to it that their elected power can be a safeguard from such inequality. Money is power and too often power is confused for unchecked privilege rather than the responsibility that it is.

Education could be a phenomenal equalizer in society, but only if education is actually equitable. It isn't. It has never been clear to me, neither as a child nor as a 41 year old, why a rising tide raising others' ships would disconcert some people. However, their fearful reaction to that idea has prevented this country from ever being as great as we pretend it is for most of its citizens. The more educated our fellow humans are, the better able we all will be to keep each other and ourselves accountable.

I have advocated for fully funded schools based on the needs of the populations of each community multiple times. This kind of legislation is how we build a consistent flow of economic power throughout the whole populace. We all benefit, even those who feel their place on top of such a steep hierarchy is threatened. Sequestered wealth of such staggering proportions is only achieved through exploitation in the first place, and the best way to prevent this system is by holding the wealthy accountable, and educating citizens from the bottom up. Public education hasn't always had such a forward thinking,

progress-oriented methodology but we're working hard to make it so. We need these resources to make that happen and I urge our elected officials to see to it that this comes to pass.

On top of the educational focus, basic needs such as food, shelter and healthcare are all abundant enough for everyone to have what is needed. When my unhoused students with too little to eat and no access to healthcare come to school, all our best efforts are still not meeting their needs.

We have an unprecedented opportunity – and the resources – to create a state where everyone has good healthcare to lead healthy lives, high quality childcare and schools for their kids, a good job to support their families, and a safe place to call home. **I urge the Committee to have the courage to make the right choice and pass House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning The Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity.**

Thank you,
Rebecca Mickelson
East Haven, CT